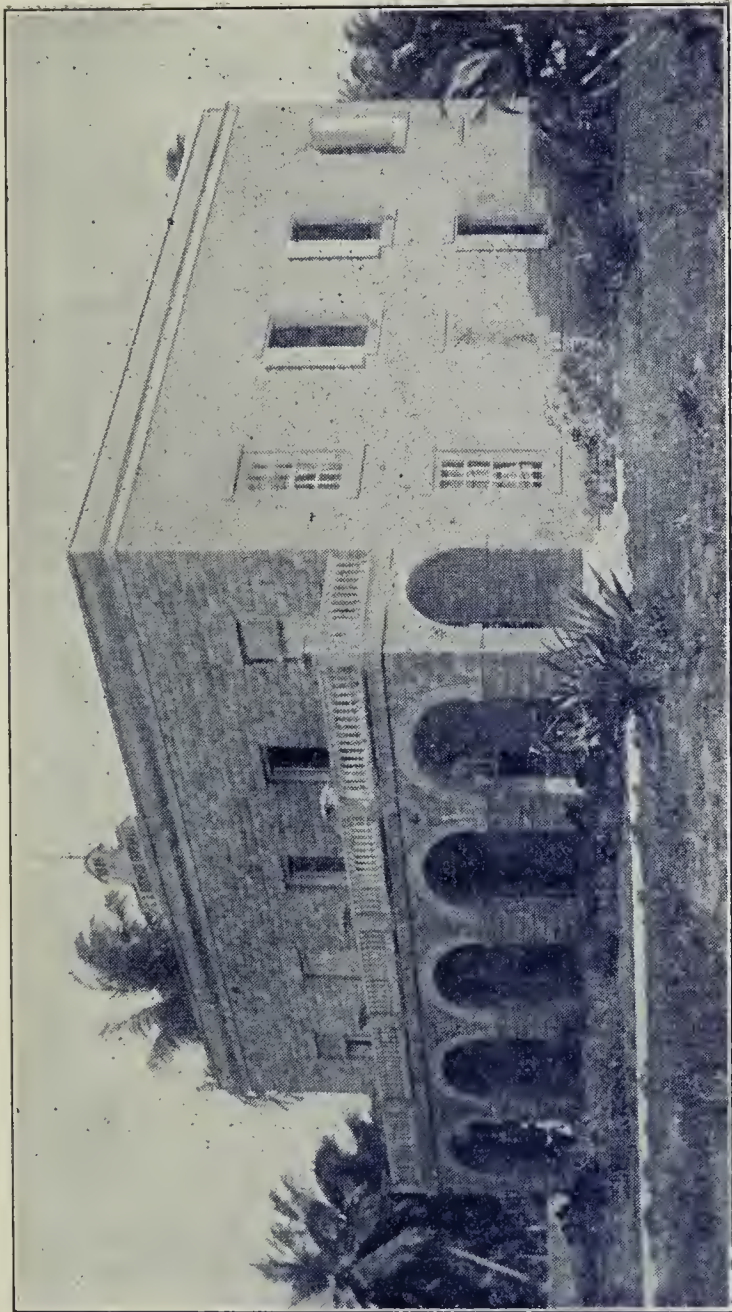


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Hoodruff, M. L.



GEORGE O. ROBINSON ORPHANAGE, SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO

Woman's Home Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York City
50 or less, 6c.; 50 to 100, 10c.

BUREAU FOR PORTO RICO

MRS. MAY LEONARD WOODRUFF, Bureau Secretary

BEAUTIFUL Porto Rico, "the island of enchantment," the land of perpetual summer, of magnificent scenery, of abject poverty side by side with great wealth, of ignorance and superstition as well as of education and culture, the land that needs the leavening power of the gospel of Jesus Christ !

Since the American occupation in 1898, Porto Rico has gone forward by leaps and bounds. Eleven years ago the commerce of the island was rated at \$17,500,000. In 1911 it was \$77,000,000. The value of the oranges exported in 1902 was \$50,000. In 1911, \$700,000.

The land swarms with people, its population in 1910 being 1,118,012; multitudes of them are very poor, and still suffering from the effects of centuries of Spanish misrule. When the Americans assumed charge there was but a single building on the island devoted exclusively to education. Four hundred years of government and one schoolhouse !

The extortions of the priests together with the ignorance of the people resulted in flagrant immorality. A large percentage of the children were illegitimate so far as law was concerned; it must be said, however, that many parents who lived together without entering lawfully into the marriage relation have been faithful to each other, and have now been legally married.

The people suffer greatly from poor nutrition and from diseases due to unsanitary conditions. But there is no country where it pays better to be well fed, and properly clothed and housed, to work honestly and diligently and to observe faithfully the laws of sanitation.

Out of such conditions come many of the girls in our Orphanage. One poor child who had been with people who cared only for what she did as a servant, was subjected to great cruelty, and at last driven into the street. She found her way to the shelter of the Home, where she has responded most readily to the kind treatment received. Another lived with a poor and feeble old grandfather, and came to the Orphanage with scant clothing, pinched features and sores on her body as the result of insufficient and improper food. A few weeks at the Home gave her new uplift and outlook. Wholesome food and proper habits brought physical health.

A mother of a child died, and the father went with

the little two-year-old on his shoulder asking from place to place, "Who will take this child as a gift?" At last a poor family received her, giving a home such as it was. Then the husband died, and the widow found the struggle too hard, and abandoned the child to whatever fate she might meet. She is now in the Orphanage, a beautiful little girl, receiving shelter, education, Christian culture and discipline for the work of life.

THE ORPHANAGE

It is for just such help as this that the George O. Robinson Orphanage stands. It takes its name from the Christian gentleman whose munificence made possible the institution in its present development. Its work began in 1902, with a few small children in a rented house in a suburb of San Juan. Later the present building was erected in San Turce, another suburb. The work has been directed from the beginning by the faithful Bureau Secretary who now rejoices in blessed returns for untiring labors.

The location of the Orphanage is ideal; it is near the ocean and the park, and includes about four acres of land, on which are several buildings well adapted to the work. It is far enough from San Juan to escape the distractions of the crowded city, but a trolley line passing near the entrance gives adequate means of access.

The one life built most fully into the Orphanage was that of Miss Hannah Hegeman, its superintendent from 1902 to 1910, when ill health compelled her return home.

The following year Miss Alice Johnson was in charge, being succeeded in December, 1911, by the present superintendent and assistant, Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Murray.

As in all our Homes, the girls are taught that brains and skill are needed in the commonest acts of life; they are led to discover the difference between house-keeping and home-making, and become accustomed to the little touches of taste that transform a humble house into a real home.

We are frequently asked, "What are these girls to do when they go out from the Orphanage?" In general, we answer, "They will go out to take the places for which they are best fitted, as do other girls." They are handicapped by homelessness and inheritance. They are of all grades of ability, but their training has been for true womanhood and Christian character. One of the first girls in the Home is now the wife of a worthy man, a skilled carpenter and a local Methodist preacher, and they have established a Christian home.

Two of the Home girls have received special training

in the Lucy Webb Hayes Training-school at Washington; one of these is now the successful teacher of Domestic Science in the Home, and the other enters the Society's kindergarten work on the island. Another girl is teaching English and Spanish in a family school in San Domingo.

THE DAY SCHOOLS

Besides the Orphanage the work in Porto Rico includes a system of day schools, chiefly of the kindergarten type. The public schools have made progress along all lines, but they cannot meet all the needs.

In many communities the government has not funds sufficient to provide school accommodation and instruction for all the children. This furnishes a large opportunity of which the Woman's Home Missionary Society has taken advantage by establishing schools at several strategic points, as in San Juan, Puerta de Tierra, Ponce, Vieques, etc.

Many children above kindergarten age have in these schools their only opportunity for school training. Reading and writing are taught, number and language lessons are given, together with Bible and moral teaching, and the children are led into the church and Sunday-school as well as the day school. In one school of sixty pupils, the entire number are regularly in the Sunday-school. To ensure this the teacher must make her way into the patios and wretched homes of the poor to find the neglected children and carry cheer to their poor, hard-worked mothers.

NEEDS

Scholarships for those now in school or waiting the possibility of admittance. These, which are nominally \$40 in the Orphanage and \$15 in the day schools, need to be supplemented by additional funds, as these amounts do not defray the cost to the Society.

Increased facilities for housing and training the homeless ones who seek our care. Almost weekly applicants have to be denied entrance for want of funds and want of room.

Additional teaching force. In order to ensure this, some servant of God who can not come could send a teacher and assume payment of her salary. Oh, that some one would hear this call and answer it speedily!

Among lesser needs are a new range for the kitchen and a new refrigerator (a necessity in the tropical climate). A good cow would add greatly to the comfort of the Orphanage family and decrease the expenses.